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'MI6 paid for election'

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BRITISH Intelligence subsidised an election campaign in the Seychelles to help secure the victory of James Mancham, then President, against his left-wing opponent.

Mancham, now living in exile in London, says he accepted payments from MI6 offered initially by a man named Fox Tolbert, who visited him at his London hotel room and gave an address and box number in Oxford.

Contributions totalling £12,000 were paid regularly into Mancham's bank account for use in the election campaign of April 1974, according to Mancham's autobiography, 'Paradise Raped' (Methuen).

Mancham was visiting London to try to persuade the Government to offer the Seychelles full integration with Britain. Britain refused and pressured him into demanding independence.

Then 'Tolbert,' a tall, well-built, smartly dressed man wearing a club tie, arrived. He searched under the table and chairs, checked the television and examined the bathroom, explaining: 'In this electronic age, you never know what might be around.'

He said a 'committee' he represented, whose names would have to remain unknown to Mancham, was satisfied that Albert René, leader of the opposition Seychelles People's United Party, was 'in the pay of the communists.' It had been decided to provide Mancham's Seychelles Democratic Party with a monthly allowance.

Mancham went on to win the election with 53 per cent of the votes, but with a big majority of seats. In June 1976 the Seychelles became independent and a year later Mancham was ousted by René while attending a Commonwealth conference in London.

Just before independence, Mancham also signed a document authorising the American Central Intelligence Agency to organise his intelligence system to monitor opposition groups, to train a paramilitary unit, and to subsidise the Seychelles Weekly, a local newspaper, with the money to be paid through the US Embassy in Nairobi. But investigations into the CIA in America led to the project being delayed, then dropped.